



For Immediate Release
March 6, 2002
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New Exhibit Will Honor Women Who Have Shaped Missouri's History

Missouri's First Lady Lori Hauser Holden and former Missouri Supreme Court Justice Ann Covington will be among the guests of honor at the unveiling of an exhibit next week celebrating several women in Missouri's history.

In honor of Women's History Month, the Missouri Women's Council and the State Museum of the Department of Natural Resources will co-sponsor an exhibit commemorating Missouri women whose fortitude, persistence, and judgement led them to enter and succeed in occupations that were formerly the domain of men.

The exhibit, entitled "The Exceptions that Created the Rule," will debut at 11 a.m. March 14, in the Capitol Rotunda. The exhibit will feature more than 50 women who were the firsts in their particular field in Missouri.

Holden will welcome guests to the event and Covington, who is among the honorees, will give the keynote address. A reception will immediately follow the event in the Elizabeth Rozier Gallery at the Jefferson Landing State Historic Site, 101 Jefferson Street in Jefferson City.

Individuals or groups that are interested in viewing this historical display can do so throughout the spring. The exhibit will be on display in the Capitol Rotunda from March 5 through June 30 and in the Elizabeth Rozier Gallery from March 5 through 31.

"We are pleased to honor a few of the great women who have shaped our state's history with this special exhibit which we believe is not only informative but inspirational as well," said Cheryl Grazier, executive director of the Missouri Women's Council.

As recently as the 1970s women's history was virtually an insignificant topic in the United States. To address this situation, the Education Taskforce of Sonoma County (California) Commission on the Status of Women initiated a "Women's History Week" celebration in 1978.

In 1987, the National Women's History Project petitioned Congress to expand the national celebration to the entire month of March. Since then, the National Women's History Month Resolution has been approved with bipartisan support in both houses of Congress. Each year, programs and activities in schools, workplaces, and communities have become more extensive as information and program ideas have been developed and shared.

The women's council was established in 1985 by state law to identify and address issues affecting the economic and employment status of Missouri women. As part of the Department of Economic Development's Division of Workforce Development, the council strives to advance economic opportunities and address civic and family issues by working closely with other agencies and community-based organizations to promote the well being of women in Missouri. The bipartisan council is comprised of 15 members: 11 appointed by the governor, two state senators, and two state representatives.